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IN TOUCH WITH YOUR TIME





Streets ahead...

Allegedly there was no street partying in New Orleans for double AMA SX and FIM World Champion Ryan Villopoto. Even though the Kawasaki rider claimed his ninth win from fourteen events word from the paddock hinted that RV was already full-steam ahead with preparations for the Motocross season starting on May 19th

Photo by Steve Cox



AMA-MX



Watch SX New Orleans
VIDEO



Lens master...

Mikey Neale is the subject of a second look into the creative talent that projects our favourite sports to the screen. A detailed interview with the Welshman, who has become a renowned figure in the off-road world for the quality of his video work, can be found later in the issue. Here he shoots Rockstar Suzuki's Tanel Leok. Simply click the 'O' to go there

Photo by Ray Archer





Watch Rockstar Suzuki vid
VIDEO



MotoGP

Entering Lorenzo's Land...

Jorge Lorenzo's superb first round MotoGP record continued two weeks ago at Qatar – the Spaniard has taken a podium result at opening races of the season for the last seven years. This and other little snippets of information, statistics and trivia can be found through our focus on the Yamaha rider. Click the 'O' to check it out

Photo by www.yamahamotogp.com





Watch Lorenzo interview
VIDEO

ONE MAN

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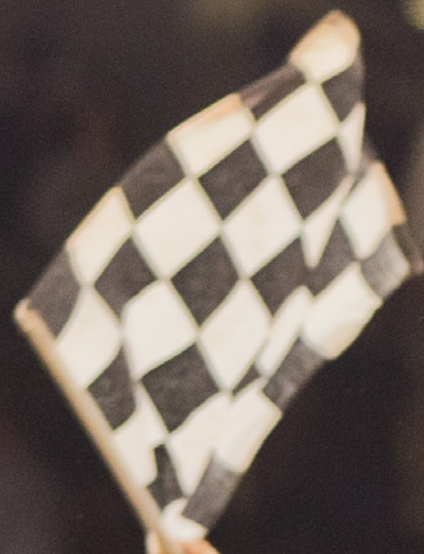
Supercross winner: Ryan Villopoto, Kawasaki

SX Lites East winner: Darryn Durham, Kawasaki



NINE...

Words and photos by Steve Cox





Watch SX Post-race show
VIDEO



Watch Barcia intro
VIDEO



Title number two for a more mild-mannered Barcia. The Honda man has been ahead of his rivals all season

It's not often that the Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki team struggles. But it happens. Of course, 'struggling' to the most successful Lites racing team in AMA history means 'not winning in more than five races'. That being said though the Pro Circuit boys have been making hard work of it on the East swing of the Lites championship. Both of their riders – Darryn Durham and Blake Baggett –

have been hitting the podium half the time but most of the Eastern Regional Championship has been the Justin Barcia Show. Barcia has been dominant all season, and all he needed in New Orleans was a fourth place to clinch the title with one round remaining. That, he achieved. But what the Pro Circuit guys managed was almost as notable. Durham came through to win the first race of his career

Blake Baggett's lack of form has been a mystery to many this season. This was the view that most had at New Orleans though



Watch Lites race
VIDEO

in New Orleans, leading from the second lap, and his team-mate Baggett finished right on his tail in second.

Baggett was a favorite coming into the East title chase but he heads into the break without a single win sitting fifth in points. He was close enough to make a (very aggressive) move for the lead in the last couple of corners, but he held back. Why? Because it was his team-mate

in front of him, and he knew Pro Circuit boss Mitch Payton would be happy with a 1-2, and pretty pissed with a 1-7 or whatever would've happened if Baggett took Durham out to try and win the race.

Still, after a season of struggles on the east coast, once again the Pro Circuit team has done what no other team has been able to do, which is go 1-2 in a main event.

A first podium since that surprise win in 2009 brought Josh Grant in from the injury wilderness



Watch New Orleans GoPro Lap
VIDEO

And in the 450cc class, New Orleans just marked more of the same for Monster Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto. Since he has clinched the title indoors, between races he has shifted his focus to preparing for the 2012 AMA National Motocross Series, but he's still easily the class of the depleted 450cc field

right now. He led every lap of the main event in New Orleans and it truly seemed like he was on cruise control on his way to his ninth win of the season.

There are three rounds left now and Villopoto is showing no signs of slowing down.

Justin Brayton's attrition means he is now third in the SX class standings



However, after New Orleans he did indicate that he's not incredibly focused on winning more races right now. His focus is outdoors, so he isn't going to do anything crazy to win a race in a championship that has already ended.

But, of course, it's one thing to say that, and another to do it. He is a competitor after all. We'll see what he does if he gets a bad start in any of the final three main events left to run in 2012.

A first win for Durham and reaffirmation for the Pro Circuit crew on the East coast. A star in the making?





"So, where are they?" Villopoto was again peerless in New Orleans







AMA-SX CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMA SUPERCROSS RESULT

Riders

1	Ryan Villopoto, USA	Kawasaki
2	Josh Grant, USA	Kawasaki
3	Justin Brayton, USA	Honda
4	Brett Metcalfe, AUS	Suzuki
5	Andrew Short, USA	Honda

AMA SUPERCROSS LITES WEST COAST RESULT

Riders

1	Darryn Durham, USA	Kawasaki
2	Blake Baggett, USA	Kawasaki
3	Justin Bogle, USA	Honda
4	Justin Barcia, USA	Honda
5	Ken Roczen, GER	KTM

AMA SUPERCROSS STANDINGS (AFTER 14 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Ryan Villopoto	321
2 Davi Millsaps	206
3 Justin Brayton	201
4 Ryan Dungey	192
5 James Stewart	178

AMA SUPERCROSS LITES EAST STANDINGS (AFTER 7 OF 8 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Justin Barcia	185
2 Darryn Durham	143
3 Ken Roczen	143
4 Blake Wharton	142
5 Blake Baggett	128

SETTING THE PACE...

By Steve Cox

Supercross has an unfair distinction as being inherently more dangerous than motocross. When I say this, most people (especially in Europe) scoff. "Unfair?!" they ask... Yes, unfair. It's unfair because if you add up all of the things that make supercross risky – jumps, whoops, tight tracks without a lot of room for other racers, etc. – there are just as many, if not more, things that make outdoor motocross risky as well – high speeds, racers pushing the pace when they're exhausted, heat, etc.

Face it, the essential reason why we all love two-wheeled motorsports is that they are dangerous. That's the appeal in the first place. Those of us who did race at one point in our lives, we did it because of the adrenaline. The adrenaline exists because of the risk. And knowing that the core, philosophically, of motocross and supercross is actually the risk involved that's a big reason why I find it ironically amusing when so much effort is put into making the sport 'safe'. It ain't gonna happen, folks. And it shouldn't. To make it 'safe' is to remove the root of the sport. It would kill motocross.

But I digress...

On this subject, everyone is wondering why this year there are so many injuries depleting the 450cc supercross field, when last year there were so many more top racers still racing at the end of the season. So that's what I'm tackling here.

First, let's try to grasp the concept itself: Last year, people thought more racers were healthy because four guys went into the final few rounds with a chance at the title – Ryan Villopoto, Chad Reed, Ryan Dungey, and James Stewart. Well, it's true that 75% of those guys are out of the series right now in 2012. Reed was hurt in a race crash – a massive crash – and Dungey was hurt in un-

certain circumstances while practicing or testing. And Stewart, well, I think he could actually be racing now, but he isn't. So, for only one of those three injuries can we directly, and assuredly, say happened because of 'supercross'.

But looking through the 2011 title chase and here is a list of racers who missed more than one round due to injury: Trey Canard, Justin Brayton, Ivan Tedesco, Mike Alessi, Brett Metcalfe, Kyle Regal, Michael Byrne, Tommy Hahn, Austin Stroupe, Matt Boni, Kyle Chisholm, Jason Thomas, Jake Weimer, Josh Grant, Dan Reardon. That's 15 notable guys.

Here's the 2012 list: Ryan Dungey, James Stewart, Kevin Windham, Chad Reed, Josh Hansen, Nick Wey, Andrew Short, Josh Grant, Kyle Partridge, Jeff Alessi, Ivan Tedesco, Trey Canard, Ryan Morais, Tommy Hahn, Chris Blose.

That's 15 notable guys.

Crazy, huh? So, really, the difference is that the top few guys got hurt, making the championship so boring that Ryan Dungey was still second in points heading into New Orleans after not even entering four consecutive rounds. It creates a perception of higher injury rates but it's not actually true. Not really.

But there is a reason the top guys are getting hurt: Ryan Villopoto. RV is simply flying. He's pushing the pace every weekend and I think guys are getting hurt because they're trying to keep up with him. Behind that aforementioned top group of four racers (three of whom are currently not racing), most guys don't try as hard to beat Villopoto. The guys who were pushing to catch RV are the guys who hit the dirt too much and/or too hard to continue.

So, while the concept isn't really true about more guys being out this year, if you're going to blame something on the top guys being out, don't blame the tracks, or the bikes...

Blame Ryan Villopoto.



SHORT CUT SHORT?

When Andrew Short got knocked out of the 2012 Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Series, in a first-turn heat-race crash in San Diego, it was a shoulder injury that put him on the bench. But the thing is, although shoulders can be very complicated, it wasn't that bad an injury. It was bad enough to put him out for a couple of races, but not severe enough to put him out for eight weeks. So, why wasn't he at the races? Sponsor issues. The team has been branded with the Supercross.com logos since the start of the year but sources connected to the site indicate that a collective discrepancy

from other team partners with regards to funding was the reason for the spanner throwing into the works.

So, in New Orleans, Andrew Short finally made his return – without the Supercross.com semi, and without Supercross.com graphics on his bike – pitting out of the Factory Honda truck. According to Honda team manager Erik Kehoe, Short's team still wasn't ready to go racing, but Short was sick of sitting around, so Honda is helping him hit the track until his team is ready to return. The question at this point is, Will his team return at all?



TEDESCO BACK ON TRACK

Ivan Tedesco has had weird hand injuries a couple of times in his 450cc career. A few years ago, in his second term racing the 450cc class, Tedesco had a run-in with James Stewart at the Toronto round, where Stewart basically landed on Tedesco's hand on the handlebar. Tedesco was really pissed at the time, as he thought Stewart was attempting a jump he shouldn't have been doing under the circumstances.

At LA, Tedesco had a similar thing happen, as his hand again made contact with the underside of another motorcycle, although from what I understand, it was more of just a 'racing deal' this time. Regardless, the result was a badly broken finger. He was back in action in New Orleans on his H&H Kawasaki, adding more much-needed depth to a very depleted field.



D

FEATURE



KEN ROCZEN: MAKING WAVES ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

By Adam Wheeler, portraits by Ray Archer, action by Hoppenworld.com

Red Bull KTM can be viewed as outsiders. In spite of the fact they boast the manager of Team USA and a person very part of American motocross fabric from the last three decades as head of their operation and a star rider that is the definition of the All-American good guy, the Austrians also carry a heavy international flavour to their roster for 2012. Marvin Musquin and Ken Roczen – FIM MX2 World Champions for the last three years – are distinctive names in the Supercross pack. European presence in AMA circles is skeletal almost as slim as American representation in the FIM Motocross World Championship and the Frenchman and German are as good as it gets at the sharp end of the leaderboard.

Roczen may not have taken the 2012 campaign by storm (a broken arm before the season even started put paid to that) but he is still a golden boy for his ability, flamboyance, outgoing personality, looks and nationality. A supreme talent from eastern Germany that is enamoured with the AMA scene seemingly as much as the fans are with the seventeen year old, particularly a young female element judging by some of the posts to his twitter account.

Roczen chatted to OTOR about his new life in the United States and spared some time for Ray Archer to snap some portraits shots at Dodger Stadium.

So, settled in?

Yeah, pretty much. I knew from coming out here for a few races last year how it would be and after I moved into my new house with all the new furniture life started to feel a bit easier and more settled. We were living in a suitcase with a small apartment before. There was not much privacy and after training, when you just wanted to lie in a bath, that sort of thing that wasn't possible! At home we had something like twenty acres and lots of space and this was the complete opposite so it was something we had to out up with for a while.

There were plenty of photos and videos of you in good form over the winter and getting ready for supercross so the broken arm must have been gutting...

Up until the crash I was riding really well. I am fitter than I've been before and I have done a lot of motos and training. Everything went just perfectly up until I made a dumb mistake, jumped a bit short and the landing bounced me off the bike.

I landed on my feet but had to put my hand down. That's the way it is.

How has life changed with the life-changing move?


I have to say I'm tidier! At home I'd drop clothes and leave things lying around but now I find myself taking more care of everything. I take care of my packing and there is more of a system in place. At home I'm sure there were clothes in the corner of the room that had been there for six months!

No hint of homesickness...?

Not really. I have a good crew behind me and a group of friends over here. It is not that I don't miss home because I have friends I have known and hung out with for a long time but here is it about the riding and the training. I wake up, train, have lunch, train and go to sleep. There is not that much time anymore. I still try to find a good rhythm of trying not to do too much and enjoy life.







**“I honestly miss those training motos at Lommel!
Also the GPs. After two-three years of riding there I had a
system. I knew the schedule, the timetable, the tracks...”**

D

FEATURE



Watch Roczen at home
VIDEO

FMV

Has being out here – with access to all the track and good riding conditions - really improved you as a rider?

I have improved in supercross for sure. I have more experience in both riding and racing supercross. I had to get in the rhythm. It feels like the season is not that long. I have grown up a little more. Last year I went out on the track and jumped everything on the first lap, now I am taking it a little easier without losing my attacking and smooth style. I am taking it easy in a good way.

So you don't miss all those freezing winter training motos in the Lommel sand?

I seriously do miss Lommel! Especially in wintertime when it was shitty, messy and wet. The tracks here are all flat and you can ride in ideal conditions for hours. We don't even have any sand tracks out here – that I know of – so I miss that. Also the GPs. After two-three years of riding there I had a system, I knew the schedule, timetable, the tracks and didn't have to worry and could take it easy. I will miss the Grands Prix for sure.

You are not an 'unknown' here but there must still be a bit of a novelty factor in your profile with the fans. How is it?

In Europe it was really good with the fans and friends and over here it has started to become a bit crazy too but I like that.

It is different here because everything is so big. There are some fans from the east coast, west, everywhere. It feels like a different culture but the sport seems to be received so well wherever we go.

Do the team and the set-up operate any differently to the factory crew in Europe?

It is a bit different here and I feel more comfortable. I think it has to do with hanging out so much in the workshop and spending so much time together that everybody becomes friends. I'm there every day and the way it works with Roger is that everybody knows when we have to get serious. It is a factory team and everybody thinks it must be serious and regimented but the atmosphere is loose and friendly and I think something like that helps with the results.

Marvin was a big rival in Europe. How do you get on with him?

Really good. We have been hanging out and jet-skiing together. He is a really nice person. We have been big rivals but not in a bad way. We were racing clean and it is fun to ride with him. We practiced a lot together with super-cross.

Being an AMA rider are there more demands on your time?

Definitely more. At the GPs we had two days but here it is just the Saturday to do stuff. There is press day and because I am now doing east coast it means more travelling. There is more emphasis on radio and podcasts here and not much of that in Europe.

When you see the big light show...

It is sick!

...you can understand why European riders would want to come out here and try the series...

Yeah...it is difficult to explain...Actually I have to say the opening ceremonies suck a little bit this year because in 2011 there were little videos and more of a show. Everybody says it is one of the most important parts of the race. Coming here as a rider, coming through that gate and onto a track that is surrounded by so many people...it is a special feeling.

What's your view on the future? Do you want to be a multi U.S. Champion and then head home?

I think I'll go home eventually....'yes and no' I guess. I want to stay in America but I know how fast things can work in the sport over here. You can be the champion one day and then the next nobody likes you any more. We've just bought a house and at the moment I am only focussed on the job over here but... we'll see.



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photo credit: M. Maragni

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JORGE LORENZO

THE NUMBERS AND TRIVIA...

By Adam Wheeler, photos by www.yamahamototgp.com

Jorge Lorenzo was born on the 4th May 1987, less than two weeks after Wayne Gardner had won the Spanish Grand Prix at Jerez. Lorenzo would make his Grand Prix debut on the second day of practice – his birthday – at the same circuit fifteen years later. Almost ten years on from that debut Lorenzo now has the same number of premier class victories as the Australian.

He is from Mallorca and along with record-breaking tennis player Rafa Nadal is one of the island's most famous exports. Allegedly has a home just outside of Barcelona. Read his biography here: <http://www.yamahamotogp.com/jorge-lorenzo/biography.php>

Lorenzo scored points in only his fourth Grand Prix with 14th position at Catalunya; a record at that time thanks to his age of 15 years and 43 days. He completed the first three seasons of his career as a Derbi factory rider (125cc) and then won two titles in three years of 250cc racing.



FEATURE

His first Grand Prix podium came on his 26th appearance, at Rio for the Grand Prix of Brazil in September 2003. It was also his first win and the opening trophy of what would be 39 in all classes to-date. His manoeuvre in the thrilling dice with Casey Stoner, Dani Pedrosa and Alex De Angelis to cross the line first gave way to his 'por fuera' (on the outside) logo.





See Jorge's sense of humour
VIDEO



250cc World Championships were won with Aprilia in 2006 and 2007. He was the last double champion in the class (and one of fifteen riders to own more than one 250cc crown in the sixty-one year history of the category from 1949 to 2009). He won 17 races (more than any other Spaniard) and took 29 podiums in 48 appearances on the quarter-litre machine. Also worth noting that at Mugello in 2005 he was the youngest ever 250cc pole position holder.

Lorenzo famously took pole position and second place on his MotoGP debut at Qatar in 2008. With his win two weeks ago Lorenzo has walked a podium every season for the past ten years and celebrated a triumph for nine of ten seasons. He set a record for the most points scored in one term with 383 and 16 podiums from 18 in 2010.

His most successful seasons have been in 2007 and 2010 where he trod the top step of the rostrum on nine occasions in a single campaign. He was champion both years.

In 2010 he became Spain's first ever MotoGP Champion and only the second Spanish World Champion in the premier class after Alex Criville in 1999. In the 45 years since Britain's Barry Sheene won in 1977 only four nations have claimed the premier class 500cc/MotoGP crown: United States, Italy, Australia and Spain.

He only passed his motorcycle road test this year...after racing professionally at the highest level since 2002. Needless to say this campaign will be his eleventh in Grand Prix.

Together with Casey Stoner, Valentino Rossi and Randy De Puniet – and discounting CRT or Moto2 - Lorenzo is the only current racer to have ridden for four or more manufacturers in the FIM series. He starts his fifth season with Yamaha in 2012. Derbi was his previous longest employer.



With 39 Grand Prix wins Lorenzo is the 11th most successful rider of all time. Only one more victory will draw him level with Casey Stoner and three more will equal the total of 42 achieved by his hero Max Biaggi. In the premier class his 18 wins make him the equal 14th in the history of the contest. He needs another two to tie with Freddie Spencer.

Lorenzo's win at Qatar was his fourth at the venue in all classes. The Spaniard has always been a strong starter and has taken podium results at the first round of the championship for the last six consecutive seasons prior to Losail two weeks ago.

Lorenzo's best circuits seem to be Assen, Brno and Jerez. He has celebrated a triumph at these tracks on four different occasions throughout the classes. Perhaps Estoril is his strongest? He has been on the podium at Portugal every year since 2007. He will be aiming for a hat-trick of consecutive victories this year at Jerez.

His charity work includes dressing as an Astronaut for the Anima Children's calendar, donations and support for Help Haiti, Rock&Race (with Global Humanitaria to help school children in Peru) and Riders for Health.

He is a fan of Barcelona FC and his dedicatory helmet and leathers worn for the 2009 Grand Prix of Catalunya now stand in the football club's new museum.

His personal profile on his website says: "I'm a maverick by nature and for that I am looking to better myself every day, both on the track and off it. I don't think one should just settle for being himself but should try to be the best version of himself."



VR 46 FAST ON FOUR...

It was nice to see that Valentino Rossi managed his first race finish of the season on Sunday, although he'll have to wait a little longer for his first silverware of the campaign after taking eighteenth place overall in the Blancpain Endurance Series car race at Monza.

Driving a Kessel Racing Ferrari 458, Rossi had the home crowd on their feet during qualifying when he briefly led the standings, only to drop back to tenth place on the grid, and he was forced to make up positions in the torrentially wet three-hour race after his co-driver and life-long friend Alessio 'Uccio' Salucci got tangled up with a back-marker in the early stages of the race. "In the future if I want to go racing it is better for me in a car than on a bike," said Rossi, who was making his first competitive GT

outing after impressing in the WRC and Monza Rally in the past.

"I have done rallying but it is more about controlling the car on the slide on the gravel. In GT racing it is about racing lines, breaking and rhythm and I enjoy it a lot. I enjoy sprint races because I have more experience in that but the Blancpain is just right for me at three hours. It is between a sprint race and an endurance race. The field of cars is impressive and the driver line-up very strong."

Others taking part in the Monza event were Le Mans 24 winner David Brabham - the youngest son of three-times F1 World Champion, Sir Jack Brabham - and former F1 drivers Mark Blundell and Karl Wendlinger.



BRIDGESTONE LEADING FROM THE FRONT

Not content with all round positive feedback on their 2012 rubber after the opening round of the season at the challenging Lo-sail circuit, Bridgestone have announced that production of a new specification front tyre developed during preseason testing has been brought forward and a limited supply of the revised construction will be available to the twenty-one rider MotoGP field from the next round at Jerez on April 29th.

Riders reported improved feel and warm-up performance from the new spec front, which will replace the current spec completely as of

round six at Silverstone. In the meantime each rider will have two units of the new spec available (so for Jerez, Estoril, Le Mans and Catalunya) in addition to their current race weekend allocation of nine fronts.

This will come as welcome news to the likes of Casey Stoner and Ben Spies, who struggled with severe chatter in Qatar. Chatter is a notoriously complicated condition to relieve a motorcycle of but finding more front grip without turning the bike upside down is a rare blessing.



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OLD FACES, NEW PROBLEMS...

By Matthew Roberts

After a highly enjoyable return to the rigours of life amidst the MotoGP circus in Doha I have spent the last week in Sitges, near Barcelona, where I still have a flat from my days working for Dorna. It provided me with an all-too-rare opportunity to get some time on a dirt-bike with Señor Wheeler and although I was impressed with his riding ability I have to admit that I was far more starstruck two days later, when I ran into former 500cc World Champion Wayne Gardner, out for a Sunday afternoon stroll on the beach.

Gardner has recently moved over here from Australia to try and give his eldest son Remy a push up the slippery ladder to MotoGP glory via the globally accepted feeder series, the CEV (Spanish Championship). You'd think that with such an illustrious surname this would be something of a formality for young Remy, especially given that he seems to have inherited his father's natural gift for strangling a motorcycle until it agrees to carry him around a circuit as fast as it possibly can.

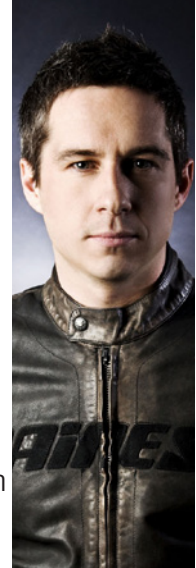
The problem is that with the national series here in Spain switching to brand new Moto2 and Moto3 machinery to mirror the Grand Prix structure, teams are faced with similarly escalated costs (minus the intercontinental travel expenses) and if you want a competitive ride then you'll need to bring in upwards of 200,000 euros, regardless of your surname. Unless you are Spanish and therefore appealing to a company with a commercial interest in a national series then that is clearly an impractical sum of money to spend on a year of racing. The marginally cheaper but much more time-consuming and logistically complicated option is to run your own team, a solution that the Gardners have plumped for, concurrently developing a brand new Moto3 machine for Moriwaki.

While I was in town I popped over to see my old neighbour and another Grand Prix legend in Randy Mamola, whose 17-year-old son Dakota is making his return to racing this season after being forced out for over a year with a shoulder injury. For the very same reasons as his fierce former 500cc rival, Randy has decided that the CEV is too pricey and has entered Dakota in the Italian Superstock 600 series, where a competitive ride sets you back around 80,000 euros, albeit without a direct route to Grand Prix racing.

Thankfully the Italian Federation are reacting to this worrying scenario by investing money to improve their own series and by entering their own team in the Moto3 World Championship, affording young Romano Fenati the opportunity to make his stunning GP debut in Qatar. Team Gresini are also doing their bit, backing Niccolò Antonelli in the minor category, and the Red Bull Rookies Cup has provided valuable opportunities to the likes of Danny Kent and Arthur Sissis this year.

However, in Qatar there were Spanish winners in all three categories: Jorge Lorenzo, Marc Marquez and Maverick Viñales. The only riders with a realistic chance of challenging Casey Stoner for the MotoGP title this year are both Spanish (Lorenzo and Dani Pedrosa) and the clear championship favourites in the two smaller classes are, of course, also Spanish (Marquez and Viñales).

The solution is complicated, unclear and will take a seismic shift in the structure of national championships as well as the global economy. However, what is clear that the current and short term future of the sport revolves around Spanish talent and unless something happens soon there is little hope for change in the long term.



LENS MAGIC...(PART TWO)

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer

Continuing OTOR's part-dedication part-exploration of how we are able to enjoy motorcycles, motorcycling and racing through a difficult and artistic medium we spoke to arguably the most popular and sought-after videographer in the off-road world, Mikey Neale.

The 36 year old Welshman has centred his work in motocross since 2009 and has set standards in Europe for his vision and art. An award-winning and hard-working creative, the former P.E. teacher talks here about his approach, tools and the ever-shifting world of video production that has undergone a major revolution in the past ten years thanks to Youtube social networking, the march of technology and the likes of GoPro...





Watch Mikey's edit
from Valkenswaard

VIDEO





On what makes a good video...

I think a really good video is one that has been thought-out and well-planned, not just through the story development but the thought behind the composition of shots, the things you want in focus and out of focus. You are drawing the eye of the viewer. There are a lot of guys that just stand at the side of the track and follow a rider from one corner to the next. Those videos have their place, but I like edits with very strong compositions, a bit of depth of field and those that present the action in a different way...each shot telling a story within the story.

On whether there is still a place for feature length documentaries and clips among YouTube saturation...

There is a lot of varied and experimental content online but I think there is room for documentaries and films. In order for them to be successful they need fairly high production values and something that will make them stand above the kind of thing you can see on

the internet. I know The Great Outdoors and the Moto movies by Taylor Condon do really well. I know America is a slightly different market and there are a lot more people to reach but I still feel there's a place for a very good motocross film in Europe. The first thing you need is budget and at the moment in the sport there is not a lot of it around. It is still a great aspiration of mine to make a motocross film with a strong storyline that the fans can get their teeth into.

On the ideal length of an internet clip with so much material in competition for eye balls...

I've had a debate with a few people about this in the past. There are some guys with internet-based backgrounds and they'll say that nobody watches a video after three or four minutes and they just switch off. I completely disagree with that. If the video is purely action then, personally, I do get bored after three minutes or so but if there is a storyline and a bit of dialogue then there is no limit.

“There is no wrong or right way to make a video, neither is there a formula. I want my edits to look as cinematic as possible. People are always going to judge, so you have to have high quality control...”



On HD broadcast quality video and SLR cameras opening video production to the masses...

You've always got to try and keep moving forward and there are always young guys coming through. The older guys might see the digital age as a negative thing because everyone can access cameras and for £1000 for an SLR you can shoot images that are comparable to 35mm film. It has been a massive revolution in the industry but I think it is a good thing that more people are picking it up and new talent is coming through all the time because you cannot rest on your laurels and must always look for something new, whether it's equipment, new techniques with filming or editing...you have to keep on re-inventing yourself. I think I am at the stage now – as much as I don't want to – I have to alter my style a little bit because the others that are starting to film have borrowed a few of my ideas with the locked-off compositions! I'll have to look for some new ways to shoot.

On taking inspiration...

I do watch a lot of films...and it is actually quite annoying because I can't watch a film anymore without looking at the set-up or how a specific camera movement has been created rather than enjoying the movie! I take a lot of inspiration from films and no matter what budget

I have at my disposal for a job I do want to try and make it look as cinematic as possible with dolly shots, jib arms shots and glidecams. People are always going to judge your films so you have to have a high quality control for your stuff.

On looking for new things...if you've seen one slow-mo tracking shot then you've seen a hundred...

It is a challenge to produce shots and angles that people might not have seen before. There has been so much content on the internet and there are some really talented videographers in Britain and the guys at Vurb moto in the U.S. are pushing some boundaries with regards to motocross.

Don't get me wrong, I borrow ideas, but to find some new ground is the real challenge. Technology is always changing with cameras that shoot higher frame rates and quality and this can bring in a new style of shooting.

Compact cameras you can buy now for £600 can film up to 1200 frames a second. Technology is going for more frames and better quality images at much slower speed and that is where the next direction of film is going to go.





Watch one of Mikey's
favourite edits

VIDEO

On the ratio of production versus post production...

Overall it takes a lot of time and I think we have to have a good work ethic to go through the hours needed on post-production. Over a Grand Prix weekend I could end up shooting between four and six hours of footage. You are constantly scanning each and every frame as you go through it trying to extract the best material for a three-minute clip. Once you have it organised then it is a process of colour correction, grading and the actually editing to make the piece flow. I would say the ratio even gets to 90% post-production and 10% shooting. I know there are guys who don't put as much emphasis on the editing and go quite a bit quicker but I tend to be quite meticulous in vetting my shots.

On putting the jigsaw together...

There is no wrong or right way to make a video, neither is there a formula. You have a blank canvas on the laptop and the possibilities are endless. A lot of it comes down to your mood on the day, things like what kind of music you have been listening to and the shots themselves...for example, filming action in the sand lends itself to a lot of slow-mo and determines the pace of the edit. Sometimes it can be four or five hours before I've put my first shot into the timeline because I reviewing the stock and thinking of ideas.



On the equipment he uses...

I am still shooting with DSLRs. Over the last few years the cameras have advanced with large sensors to allow people to shoot some great stuff and shallow depth of field. There has been some criticism of this – making clips look like film all the time - but I'm a big fan because you can direct the viewer's eye.

There are a lot of new large sensor camcorders coming out like the Panasonic AF100 and the Sony FS100 but for motocross I'm not sure I would want to walk around the track with a £10-12,000 camera just to abuse it; a lot of the kit ends up in a mess.

I'm sticking with DSLRs for the moment.

For software I prefer Final Cut Pro 7 even though they are newer versions coming. I know it inside out. For colours and grading I use Magic Bullet Suite and Apple colour.

I'm dipping my toe into 'After Effects' at the moment, which is quite a complex programme but opens a new door creatively. You can do things like replace the sky...handy for shoots in poor or dark conditions. You can play with multiple layer video files. It's like Photoshop for video. It all takes time, which is the only downside and it really depends on the job or the project.

I'm a big fan of the dolly shot and the slider I'm using at the moment is OK but it has its drawbacks.



Gary Freeman

Kessler in America make a CineSlider which runs on a belt but also allows you place a motor there so you can do motorised time lapses and really smooth tracking shots, so this is something I'm looking to invest in. I'd like to get some Zeiss compact prime video lens but then your talking £3-4,000 per lens and they would get trashed with motocross so I'd have to look at them for other projects.

On the never-ending pressure to invest...

I think every photographer or videographer has his or hers 'wish list' and it is always evolving. With technology changing you tend to set your heart on something but by the time you generate enough budget to invest there is usually another piece of kit coming along. There is so much gear and kit and the expense keeps going up but sadly the budgets for shooting and producing seems to be going down. I do believe in making the most of what you have got and I see a lot of guys with the expensive material that don't end up producing amaz-

ing stuff. These days if you have a DSLR and basic lens then that's all you need. Don't be too overly concerned with the latest gear and worry about what you're doing with the tools you have.

On experimenting with other toys...

Radio-controlled helicopters...but with the health and safety issues in the UK I don't know how low we'd be able to use them. A few years ago I started researching the RC helicopters and I've actually got myself two at the moment. One that I'm – unsuccessfully - trying to master and another that I'm saving to be the main vehicle for the camera. There is a guy who lives local to me who is actually a very good RC pilot and he'd been helping. I think in the next few months I'll be able to shoot with the heli and this obviously gives a totally different perspective and boost production values of any shoot.

On the GoPro revolution...

I'm 'hit-and-miss' with the GoPro. I think it



Watch one of Mikey's
favourite edits

VIDEO

is an amazing camera for what it is. If you are a rider or a kid who wants to go out and spend £250 on something that will shoot HD for you then it's an amazing and robust tool. I remember mine dropping into a rut at St Jean D'Angely in France and practically the whole MX1 class rode over it. I had to physically dig it out of the ground and it still worked perfectly. From that side it is brilliant and for the perspective it provides but I'm also a stickler for image quality and I don't like to mix the pictures from GoPro with what you've shot from a camera.

On other sports he'd like to try...

There are a lot of action sports I'd like to explore more and thanks to Monster Energy I'll be doing more BMX and Skateboarding this year. I used to skate as a kid and the first time I fell time I fell in love with sports films was through the Bones Brigade movies. Those were a massive inspiration. I'd like to get in amongst that gnarly action. Being Welsh I've got a big Rugby background and if I could get access to

some top players and teams, shoot with some long lens' and high speed cameras then you'd be able to show the impact and physicality of the sport; they are pretty big guys these days and I'd like to try and show the power and speed of it all on film. There is so much to shoot and so much to think about out there.

On that award-winning video of Ken Roczen's championship winner at Gaildorf...

That video is obviously something I'm proud of but the thing that made it for me – and what people won't realise – is that a lot of the fans I was shooting that weekend I've known for a number of years through travelling to GPs. One of them, Tommy, is a massive Ken Roczen fan and a friend of mine and I could see how emotional he was that day. It made a connection for me because I felt personally involved. Ken won the title in Germany and it was one of those days where everything fell into place. Every time I went to a spot I recognised people in the crowd and knew what their reactions



Watch the award-winning film

VIDEO

would be.

Ken's emotion towards the end of the video is priceless and to be able to capture that was a bit lucky and a matter of getting in the right place at the right time. The text messages and stuff I had after that video were really nice to see. The music helped as well...Ben Howard. I picked up on him before he became popular and it was a few weeks after that clip came online that the song went mainstream. I went to see him in concert in Swansea a little while after the video had been active and he played that song ['Keep your head up'] and I could see all the images from the video in my head. My missus always said I should have asked for some royalties because I turned a lot of fans onto his music! Music is something that's really important and if you find something that suits the atmosphere of the clip then it only helps.

On how he got into the business...

It wasn't something I actively pursued in the beginning. I was going to GPs and British Championship races with a few of my friends from Wales and I started to take my little camcorder along to make videos of my mates and bits of the action. I posted them on YouTube and got some nice comments. Eventually someone from Moto magazine saw them and they'd just lost their videographer and asked if I wanted to try putting videos together for them. I went on ebay and bought a second hand camera in London. Went to buy it on Friday, broke my wrist in a riding accident on Saturday and then filmed my first British Championship race on the Sunday! It went on from there and since then it has been something I'm really passionate about and put a lot of effort into getting better and improving.

@Mikeyneale21



MX NEWS **YOUTHSTREAM EXPAND TV COVERAGE FOR '12**

One of the overlooked but interesting pieces of news to come out of the Grand Prix of the Netherlands last week was Youthstream's announcement that broadcast partners have been found to cover territories in the USA, Africa, Germany and Russia for what are - and becoming - key focus areas for the FIM Motocross World Championship. Even though the U.S. Grand Prix floundered after two years of full-effort and a degree of apathy from American fans and AMA series' participants (in one of those situations where each party has their own list of grievances and the only real victim is the race itself) giving the championship coverage across the Atlantic is an important move and one that is essential for any hope of a revival for Grand Prix racing stateside (see these pages for more). Speed secondary cable channel Speed2.com is the new American and Canadian home for GPs.

Sport 1 will screen the MXGPs in Germany and on the back of a surge of interest in motocross (and perhaps motorcycle racing in general with Moto2 World Champion Stefan Bradl now in MotoGP). Even though Ken Roczen is now AMA-based and Max Nagl's career allegedly hangs in the balance after his back operation the 'Roczen effect' (the teenager was the first

German world champion for forty-three years) is still noticeable and the Talkessel circuit at Teutschenthal could again see a full house if Roczen still fancies participating in the season curtain-closer on September 23rd just one week before the Nations.

In the same way that Germany re-warmed to motocross, Russia is also gaining momentum thanks to the emerging profile and results of factory Honda ace Evgeny Bobryshev, a new Grand Prix and a mega-bucks sponsor in Investment Trade Bank. Auto Television is the new media partner in the northeast of the global map.

Widespread European coverage of the Grands Prix is still achieved in 2012 through the second of a three-year deal with cable racing channel Motors TV. It will require major investment but there is no escaping the fact that for motocross to try and breach new ground through the screen the sport has to be transmitted in HD.

Check out my blog for a few more thoughts on the subject and we'll be chasing the likes of various staff inside Youthstream's TV department for a story in the coming issues.

BLACKBIRD GET SEATED

It seems that a fair selection of the factory riders in the FIM Motocross World Championship have their 'behinds' covered thanks to Blackbird Racing who have complimented their sticker sets with patented seats. The Italians chose Valkenswaard to highlight their part in an ongoing association with Honda World Motocross that sees the works CRFs wrapped by the Blackbird fabric; no mean feat considering the technology and investment that has gone

into Honda's racing steed for 2012. The PR admonishes the 'strength, technical features and design' of the covers while also pointing out the non-slip material.

For Honda owners the replica component should be available soon for 55 euros + tax. Blackbird also contribute product to the Monster Energy Yamaha team. For more info see here: <http://www.blackbirdracing.com/>

AMERICAN GP STILL SOME WAY OFF THE HORIZON

With Youthstream targeting new or prospering territories as a priority for the expansion and health of the FIM Motocross World Championship it seems a more global scope for the series is inevitable in the coming years. As we've written in OTOR previously, even though more flyaways are difficult for all concerned, this is by no means a bad thing. In fact any diversity and extra flavour to the calendar should be widely encouraged.

Youthstream commented in Holland that another Grand Prix in the Americas is likely for 2013 but will remain at two rounds in the south rather than the north. The races at a sparse Glen Helen in 2010 and 2011 were (sadly) a failed attempt to try and find workable space in already busy AMA calendars.

It seems the biggest obstacle to another U.S. Grand Prix remains this fixture build-up that in turn would determine any level of interest from native riders, teams and industry despite heavy hitters like Monster Energy, Red Bull and Rockstar Energy all casting a curious eye. "[There is] a packed schedule of 29 races and that makes any additional events problematic in that the interest just isn't there among the athletes, their teams or the racing public. The FIM World Championships are not on TV and with all of the athletes now pretty much all European, there isn't as much demand for it as there might be with more U.S. participation or

some TV here," commented MX Sports President Davey Coombs to OTOR. "So I am not sure how or when it will work if they pursue it or how it might be different from what we saw last year...."

An American Grand Prix adds prestige to the calendar and although the sales market would not appear to be what it once was the U.S. is still an important window, as Coombs states: "The U.S. is the most prominent motocross country of all given the two viable series in Monster Energy AMA Supercross and the Lucas Oil AMA Pro Motocross Championship. Our best riders focus on those two tours."

Until the landscape changes there seems little chance of Grands Prix making a forceful impact as the pack of talented racers in MX1 and MX2 were clearly not enough of a draw at Glen Helen. The only reasonable solution (and one long mooted by industry insiders) would be a sole event where AMA and FIM points could be withdrawn from the same set of motos and a 20-rider entry from both series fill the start gate.

It would be a complicated migration of the championships considering the varying rule-books and sets of sponsors but the exciting possibility of such a ground breaking meeting should be enough to force the powers-that-be around a table for a discourse.



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WATCH IT WELL...

By Adam Wheeler



What do you think of motocross on TV...? Does it work? I'm stuck on the fence and this is as much to do with the MX's 'broadcastability' as much as any of the great efforts to make it a spectacle for the casual channel hopper. While sports like F1, MotoGP and Superbike can get over the old cliché of 'you lose the speed through the screen' with some inventive camera angles, HD and experimentation with onboards it seems a bit like MX is stuck in a rut. The obvious points out of the way first: MX is still not mainstream, it lacks the resources of other motorsports, it is arguably more expensive to cover and there is definitely more wear-and-tear on the equipment thanks to the conditions and diversity of circuit infrastructures. Through muddy or extremely rough terrain the racing turns to a grind and a 35 minute and 2 lap moto can feel very long indeed.

There has always been a compromise when it comes to that most organic aspect of the MXGPs, the track. Something like Valkenswaard, Namur or Lommel can provide a captivating spectator experience at the circuit itself. On the TV though there is 'something' missing (speed? thrills?). In contrast a circuit like Donington Park, constructed for the British Grand Prix and the 2008 Motocross of Nations, could arguably provide be a less exhilarating sensation trackside but the fast and relentless series of jumps and obstacles made motocross looked as though it was on steroids through TV. The air-time and the pace really made it work on camera.

The quality and output of the FIM Motocross World Championship through media channels like the live broadcast and the highlights package is the ultimate – and necessary – 'business card' and showreel for the sport.

At a time when countries and promoters; people like local clubs, national federations and companies like Youthstream are fighting to make the

sport sustainable it might seem a bit rich to be analysing a facet of their work that already requires a massive financial and logistical commitment and of which they have skilled professionals on the job.

I'd like to know how it could get better though.

We could only just see who was bouncing their way around Valkenswaard through the rain-covered lens' and how realistic would it be to think of MXGP in HD where the texture of the racing would come alive? Supercross has benefitted from post-event coverage through GoPro laps and race-summaries; this kind of material is another asset for the internet generation, will GPs follow?

Youthstream took a bold forward step with their MX-life.tv concept in 2011. For those wanting more, and more quality, this was the perfect fit: a dedicated channel with extra content at a price. The only setback was the broadcast of the GPs live on the web free through Freecaster for the previous two seasons. Although charging for the service and the additional material on show was reasonable, it felt like an awkward move after a small era in which motocross was so accessible for all. I'd like to reference one medium in which motocross is a clear winner above all its peers: video. Youthstream's open policy towards the surge of videographers in the last five years should be commended. The ability to get up close-and-personal in the Grand Prix tracks and paddocks is a massive and very creative asset. It is not possible in the premium motorsports like F1 and MotoGP without a fat wallet. The situation is the opposite in motocross and there is some great stuff online. There is plenty of room for video to grow and I've said before that MX Life is ahead of its time. However, as it stands, expense and ideas still have to be directed through that flat screen opposite your sofa for MX to stand a chance.



BACKPAGE

2012 Monster Energy girls
Photo by Steve Cox







'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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